

attention!!

I love someone who is dying of AIDS.

About four years ago, a friend of mine had to have open-heart surgery, and when the doctors gave him a blood transfusion, they gave him AIDS. In October, the hospital contacted him to inform him that the homosexual who had given the infected blood had died. My friend will be the next to die.

I was mad and hurt when I found out that I was going to lose my friend. However, the fact that my friend has AIDS is not what inspired this column. The inspiration was sparked by the way one of his family members is treating him.

My friend is a father of four and a grandfather of eleven. He was in World War II and is considered a hero of his country. He was a hard worker and remains a man of God. He loves his family and has always been a strong influence in their lives. Yet when one of his daughters was told about his condition, she refused to let him in her house or near her children. The most ironic part of her denial is that she holds a doctorate in biology.

Scientists tell us that AIDS is not a disease that can be transmitted like the flu. AIDS can be transmitted sexually. AIDS can be transmitted through the use of a hypodermic needle that has been used by someone with the disease. And AIDS can be transmitted through a blood transfusion. AIDS cannot be breathed on someone. AIDS cannot be coughed on someone. And AIDS cannot be transmitted by hugging someone.

My friend asked his family to test for the virus to confirm that they were at no risk in receiving AIDS, and all of the tests

proved negative. His daughter still would not change her decision—even after the tests were completed. Because of stupidity and unfounded fear, an innocent victim of this deadly disease is dying in more ways than one: AIDS is taking his life; his daughter is breaking his heart.

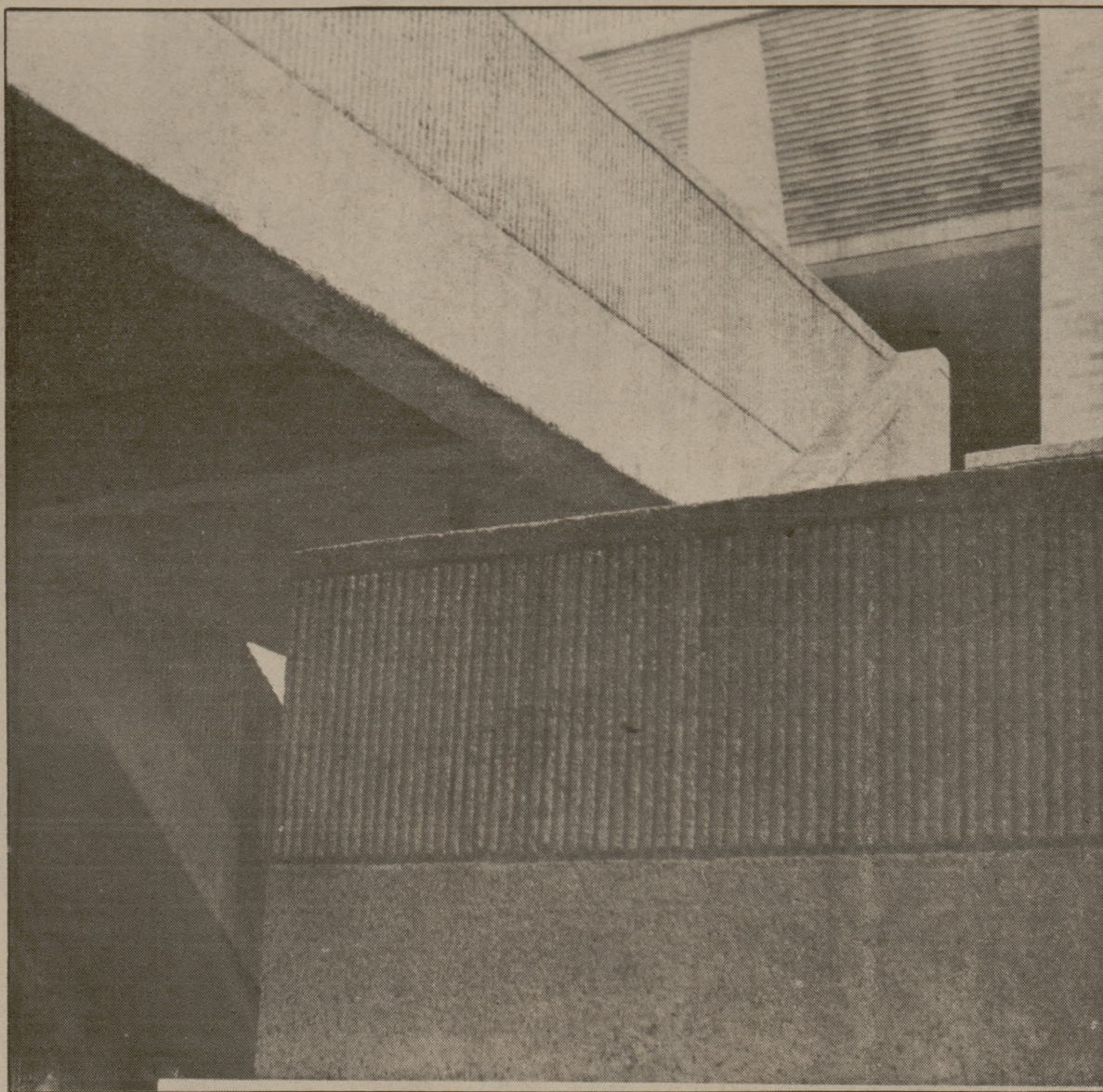
I went home to see my friend about three weeks ago. I was scared to face him, but all the way home I tried to put myself in his place. I wondered what it must feel like to know that you

are going to die very soon. I wondered if he cried when no one else could see or hear him. I wondered if he would look or act any differently than the man that I had loved for so long. And I tried to remember that the terror that I wondered about was running through his veins.

When I saw him, I realized that he had not changed. He was the same person that I had known all of my life. I tried to bite back tears when I hugged him because that will probably be one of the last hugs I will

ever be able to give him. You see, my friend doesn't know that I know his secret, because my friend doesn't want the family he loves so much to be afraid of him as his one daughter is. And this person in his family isn't.

You see, the friend who I love so much and who is dying of AIDS is my grandfather. **This week's attention!! column was written by Denise Thompson, a sophomore journalism major.**



This weeks attention!! photo of the stairway between Harrington Classroom Building and Harrington Tower was taken by graduate student Corrie Bergeron.